

IN THE CLAIMS

1-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 20, wherein the ~~fiber~~ inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization (\overline{DP}) of at least 20.

19. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 18, wherein the ~~fiber~~ inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization (\overline{DP}) of at least 25.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for the ~~inhibition or~~ treatment of systemic infections in humans or vertebrates comprising:

administering, to humans or vertebrates having a systemic infection caused by an invasion of the blood stream by ~~Gram-positive or Gram-negative~~ *Listeria* or *Salmonella* pathogenic bacteria, a dietary fiber composition comprising

an active ingredient consisting ~~essentially~~ of an effective amount of inulin a ~~fermentable dietary fiber or a mixture of fermentable dietary fibers, the fiber being an inulin-type fructan or mixture of inulin-type fructans; and~~

one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients,

wherein the composition is administered orally or through tube feeding.

21-22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the human or vertebrate is an adult human and the amount of ~~fiber~~ inulin administered to the adult human ranges from 5 to 40 g/day.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 20, wherein the human or vertebrate is an adult human and the amount of ~~fiber~~ inulin administered to the adult human ranges from 5 to 25 g/day.

25-26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A method for the ~~inhibition or~~ treatment of an infection occupying the lymph or blood in humans or vertebrates comprising administering, to humans or vertebrates having an infection caused by ~~Gram-positive or Gram-negative pathogenic bacteria~~ *Listeria* or *Salmonella* in the lymph or blood, a dietary fiber composition comprising

an active ingredient consisting ~~essentially~~ of an effective amount of inulin a ~~fermentable dietary fiber or a mixture of fermentable dietary fibers, the fiber being an inulin-type fructan or mixture of inulin-type fructans; and~~

one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients,
wherein the composition is administered orally or through tube feeding.

28-29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the ~~fiber~~ inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least 20.

31. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the ~~fiber~~ inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least 25.

32. Canceled

33. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 27, wherein the human or vertebrate is an adult human and the amount of ~~fiber~~ inulin administered to the adult human ranges from 5 to 40 g/day.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 27, wherein the human or vertebrate is an adult human and the amount of ~~fiber~~ inulin administered to the adult human ranges from 5 to 25 g/day.

35-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) A method for the ~~inhibition or~~ treatment of systemic infections in humans or vertebrates, comprising

administering, to humans or vertebrates having a systemic infection caused by an invasion of the blood stream by Listeria or Salmonella ~~Gram-positive or Gram-negative pathogenic bacteria~~, a functional food composition comprising an active ingredient consisting of an effective amount of inulin ~~a fermentable dietary fiber or a mixture of fermentable dietary fibers, the fiber being an inulin-type fructan or mixture of inulin-type fructans,~~ wherein the food composition is administered orally or through tube feeding.

38-40. (Canceled)

41. (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein the human or vertebrate is a vertebrate and wherein the inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least 20.

42. (New) The method according to Claim 20, wherein the inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least 25.

43. (New) The method of Claim 27, wherein the human or vertebrate is a vertebrate and wherein the inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least 20.

44. (New) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least 25.

45. (New) The method of Claim 37, wherein the human or vertebrate is a vertebrate and wherein the inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization $\overline{(DP)}$ of at least

20.

46. (New) The method according to Claim 37, wherein the inulin is chicory inulin with an average degree of polymerization \overline{DP} of at least 25.